



# DJJ Partnership

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## Director's comments

At the time the last issue of *DJJ Partnership* was sent to you, we were waiting to find out the amount and form of budget reductions we would be taking. Those cuts hurt, but we survived and continued to move on.



Today, as I write this, we are waiting to find out what the new budget, being negotiated by a conference committee of senators and delegates, holds in store for us.

Barry Green

We don't yet know whether we will have to absorb additional reductions. The latest revenue forecast for the Commonwealth was not encouraging. But those of us who have been around state government for many years have survived these cycles and have managed to continue moving ahead. So we'll wait and see what happens. It is possible that by the time this newsletter is released, the General Assembly may have adopted a new budget.

I do know that we had a good last year, at least as far as measurable results are concerned. Certainly, we'll always have more to do. But, as many of you know, we're seeing some very good outcomes from our efforts to reduce the number of youth coming back to the criminal justice system. Over the past two years, the percentage of youth released from our facilities who have recidivated has come down by more than 8 percentage points. Everyone had a role in this success. Facility staff have done more to prepare residents for the return to their communities, and community staff have done more to work with them, and to bring other local and state agencies to the table to provide necessary services to maintain stability in their home lives. We may have fewer resources, due to the state revenue problems, but are using what we have in more targeted ways. I am not aware of any state that has better data on juveniles, or that uses data in a more appropriate way to achieve results than we do.

This doesn't mean we are where we want to be. But we are moving strongly in the right direction. In addition to reduced recidivism, I'd like to highlight a few other markers that indicate what we're achieving:

- Overall crime rates for juveniles are down – including both non-violent and violent offenses
- The number of juveniles who are being committed to the state has dropped from 1,681 in 1998 to 1,463 in FY2000 to 863 in FY2007 (more serious offenders are being committed, while many less serious offenders who in the past were being committed are now being diverted to more appropriate placements)
- The JCC population is well under 1,000 – it was 1,462 during FY2000
- The numbers of juveniles being placed into pre-dispositional detention continues to drop – with impressive results in JDAI sites, where detention facilities had been traditionally crowded
- The number of young people being supervised on probation and parole has dropped from 10,735 in 1999 to 7,626 in 2007
- In our institutions, we've seen a 33% reduction in reportable serious incidents in the past year

Workers' compensation claims related to contact with residents of JCCs have dropped by almost 27% from 2006 to 2007

Springtime is showing its face these days – a reminder that things are cyclical. The state's finances may loom darkly at times, but overall we should feel good about what we've gotten done and what's yet to come.